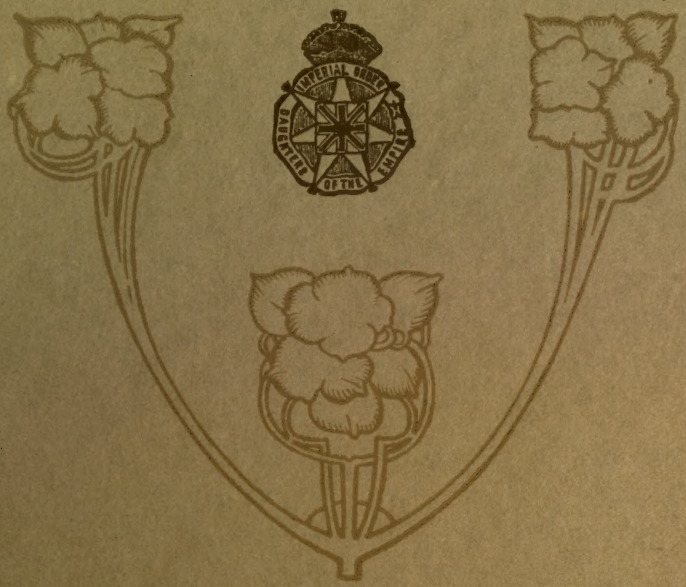
CARRY ON!

By VIRNA SHEARD



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By VIRNA SHEARD

PUBLISHED UNDER THE DISTINGUISHED
PATRONAGE OF THE IMPERIAL ORDER
OF THE DAUGHTERS OF THE
EMPIRE IN AID OF THE
RED CROSS

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CARRY ON!

THAT all freedom may abide
Carry on!
For the brave who fought and died,
Carry on!
England's flag so long adored
Is the banner of the Lord—
His the cannon—His the sword—
Carry on, and on! Carry on!

Through the night of death and tears,
Carry on!
Through the hour that scars and sears,
Carry on!
Legions in the flame-torn sky,—
Armies that go reeling by,—
Only once can each man die;
Carry on!

For the things you count the best,
Carry on!
Take love with you,—leave the rest—
Carry on!
Though the fight be short or long,
Men of ours—O dear and strong—
Yours will be the Victor's song,
Carry on—and on! Carry on!

THE YOUNG KNIGHTS

NOW they remain to us forever young
Who with such splendor gave their youth away;
Perpetual Spring is their inheritance,
Though they have lived in Flanders and in France
A round of years, in one remembered day.

They drained life's goblet as a joyous draught
And left within the cup no bitter lees.
Sweetly they answered to the King's behest,
And gallantly fared forth upon a quest,
Beset by foes on land and on the seas.

So in the ancient world hath bloomed again
The rose of old romance—red as of yore;
The flower of high emprise hath whitely blown
Above the graves of those we call our own,
And we will know its fragrance evermore.

Now if their deeds were written with the stars,
In golden letters on the midnight sky
They would not care. They were so young, and dear,
They loved the best the things that were most near,
And gave no thought to glory far and high.

They need no shafts of marble pure and cold—
No painted windows radiantly bright;
Across our hearts their names are carven deep—
In waking dreams, and in the dreams of sleep,
They bring us still ineffable delight.

Methinks heaven's gates swing open very wide
To welcome in a host so fair and strong;
Perchance the unharmed angels as they sing,
May envy these the battle-scars they bring,
And sigh e'er they take up the triumph song!

THE SHELLS

O MY brave heart! O my strong heart! My sweet heart and gay,
The soul of me went with you the hour you marched away,
For surely she is soulless, this woman white, and still,
Who works with shining metal to make the things that kill.

I tremble as I touch them,—so strange they are, and bright;
Each one will be a comet to break the purple night.
Grey Fear will ride before it, and Death will ride behind,
The sound of it will deafen,—the light of it will blind!

And whom it meets in passing, but God alone will know;
Each one will blaze a trail in blood—will hew a road of woe;
O when the fear is on me, my heart grows faint and cold:—
I dare not think of what I do,—of what my fingers hold.

Then sounds a Voice, "Arise, and make the weapons of the Lord!"
"He rides upon the whirlwind! He hath need of shell and sword!
His army is a mighty host—the lovely and the strong,—
They follow Him to battle, with trumpet and with Song!"

O my brave heart! My strong heart! My sweet
heart and dear,—
'Tis not for me to falter,—'Tis not for me to fear—
Across the utmost barrier—wherever you may be,—
With joy unspent, and deathless, my soul will follow thee.

THE WATCHER

LITTLE White Moom—Each night from Heaven you lean
To watch the lonely Seas, and all the Earth between;—
O little shining Moon! What have you seen?—

What have you seen upon the fields of France,
Where through the drowsy grain, the gay red poppies dance,
Unheeding splintered gun or broken lance?

Deep in the green-wood, shadow-laced, and still,
What is it you have found, by fern-bed and by rill?
What by each hollow—and each little hill?—

When o'er the sky the driven smoke-clouds flee,
And through a dusky veil you look down fearfully—
What do you find adrift upon the sea?

In the great mountains where the four winds blow,—
Where the King's cavalry, and his foot-soldiers go,—
What have you seen beneath the shifting snow?

Little white Moon! So old,—so strangely bright—
How could you still shine on, unless you knew some night
Here in the world you watch, all would be right!

OCTOBER GOES

OCTOBER goes, and its colors all pass:
At dawn there's a silver film on the grass,
And the reeds are shining as pipes of glass,

But yesterweek where the cloud waves rolled
Down a wind-swept sky that was grey, and cold,
Sailed the hunter's moon,—a galleon of gold!

And now in the very depth of the night
It is just a little flame, blown and white,
Or a broken-winged moth on a weary flight.

But the steadfast trees at the forest rim,
And the pines in places scented and dim,
Still wait for one hunter, and watch for him.

And the wind in the branches whispers, "Why?"
And the yellow leaves that go rustling by,
Say only, "Remember," and sigh,—and sigh.

DREAMS

KEEP thou thy dreams—though joy should pass thee by;
Hold to the rainbow beauty of thy thought;
It is for dreams that men will oft-times die,—
And count the passing pain of death as nought.

Keep thou thy dreams, though faith should faint and fail,
And time should loose thy fingers from the creeds,
The vision of the Christ will still avail
To lead thee on to truth and tender deeds.

Keep thou thy dreams, through all the winter's cold,
When weeds are withered, and the garden grey,
Dream thou of roses with their hearts of gold,—
Beckon to summers that are on their way.

Keep thou thy dreams—the tissue of all wings
Is woven first of them; from dreams are made
The precious and imperishable things,
Whose loveliness lives on, and does not fade.

Keep thou thy dreams, intangible and dear
As the blue ether of the utmost sky,—
A dream may lift thy spirit past all fear,
And with the great, may set thy feet on high!

BEFORE THE DAWN

IN that one darkest hour, before the dawn is here,
Each soul of us goes sailing, close to the coast of Fear.

There in the windless quiet, from out the folded black,
The things we have forgotten—or would forget—come back.

Old sorrows, long abandoned, or kept with lock and key,
Steal from their prison places to bear us company.

All softly come our little sins—our scarlet sins—and gray,
To keep with us a vigil till breaking of the day.

And there are velvet footsteps; or oft we seem to hear
Light garments brush against the dark; so near—so very near!

Then heavily, as weighed by tears, each haunted moment goes,
For dawn steps down the morning sky, in robes of gray and rose.

. . . . . .

O fairies of the forest-ring, and little men in green,
And pixies of the moonlight, and elves no eye hath seen,
Brew us a magic potion, of deep and fairy power,
A draught of Lethe—for one night—to tide us past that hour.

CROSSES

ALL your broken war-spent heroes,
Lord of War and Grief—you pay
With a cross of moulded iron,
Hard-wrought iron cold and grey.
On the Somme you grant five thousand
And five thousand at Verdun;
At the dawn of day you count them
And at setting of the sun.
On the trampled fields of Flanders,
On the bitter roads of France,
Where the big guns chant their war-songs,
And the crimson death-lights dance,
There you count the iron crosses
Of such high and far renown,—
Grim and grey the men who win them—
Theirs the cross—and yours the crown;—

. . . . . .

But the little wooden crosses
You have given the peaceful dead,
O the little wooden crosses,
By each young low-lying head,—
Though the tender grasses hide them,
Or they fall beneath the snows,
Not a cross shall be forgotten,—
God Himself has counted those.

THE CRY

THEY have laid him away;
Even he who was always so strong and gay
Will be locked in the earth till the judgment day;
"Dust unto dust" I have heard the priest say.

He will never return;
Though I weep my eyes blind, though I pray and yearn,—
Though the star-light goes out and the great suns burn
Into whitest ash,—he will never return.

So of weeping—no more;
It is tears fill the oceans from shore to shore;
They have made the wind salt—the wind at my door;
They harm the good ground—so of weeping—no more.

"Not again!" "Not again!"
Do you hear the sea singing that one refrain?
The pine trees, the wind and the wearysome rain
All whisper it; "Never again!"—"Not again!"

Who can tell me—who knows,
Where his lonely soul travels?
Whither it goes?—
Has he gone like the leaves?—Like yesterday's snows?—
Speak, dear Lord of Death! You who died—and arose!

A WAR CHANT

O ENGLAND! Thy foe hath hated thee long,
And his hate is a deadly thing;
It was held in his heart till its growth was strong,
Now, words have woven it into a song
For little children to sing.

It is hatred that fashioned his shot and shell,
And hatred hid death in the sea;
In hatred the cannon have sounded a knell
O'er the little homes where the peaceful dwell,
And the humble-hearted be.

Thy foe hath swept the blue from the sky
In a fury of smoke and flame;
His guns are not stilled where the wounded lie,—
He hath shown no pity to those who die
For the glory of his name.

He sealed his hate with the blood of his men—
O, the young in their coats of grey!—
They are cast aside, and in river, and fen,
Deep-hidden, where none will find them again
Till the last white judgment day.

Now mirth is forgotten and joy is dead;
The world hath accepted its pain;
Still, over old battlefields, newly red,
The shattered ranks of his army are led
In pomp and a high disdain.

Thy anger grows slowly, for thou art great,
O England! thou well beloved land;
When its tide is full-risen, then thou art Fate,—
And the angel who stands before the gate,
The sword of flame in his hand!

WHEN JONQUILS BLOW

WHEN jonquils blow I think of one
Who sleeps beneath the green;
And all the light and song of life
And all the golden sheen
Turn cold and still before my eyes,
While pearl-edged boughs of May
Seen through a sudden mist of tears
Are rimmed with ashen-gray.

TO ONE WHO SLEEPS

FARE not too far, my own,
Down ways all strange and new,
For I must find alone,
The road that leads to you.

Enchantments may arise
To lure thy little feet,
And charm thy wondering eyes;—
Yet;—wait for me, my sweet!

Already Earth doth seem
A phantom place to me,
And thy far home of dream,
Is my reality.

So this is just "good night";—
Some stars will rise and wane,
But sure as comes the light,
I'll be with thee again!—

THE SEA

THE sea is just a cradle wide and deep,—
A cradle that the moon rocks to and fro;
What peace they find who there fall fast asleep,
What lovely dreams,—'Tis not for us to know.

But God hath sent the angel of the sea
To sing to them an endless lullaby;
And that they may not dread night's mystery,
He lights for them the candles of the sky.

They are infolded by the silken waves,
And wrapped in shining blue, and emerald green;
They drift through opalescent ocean caves,
That only God Himself hath ever seen.

The great salt wind that no man holds in thrall,
Touches them softly, as it passes by;—
I think the silver sea gulls know them all,
And greet them with their lonely tender cry.

For but a little little round of years,
The sweet sun-sprinkled foam will be their bed,
And they will slumber—hushed from any fears—
To waken, when the sea gives up her dead.

COMRADES

O MIGHTY men of England
Who sleep on land and sea,
How swiftly you would join our ranks
If Death could set you free!

How gladly would they greet you,
The young—the brave—the gay,—
If you came from your long-sealed graves,
To march with them to-day.

O you would know each other,—
And meet as friend, with friend,—
And fight, and smile, and jest at Death,
Until the battles end!

REQUIEM

WEEP for the dead; weep for the swift slain dead,
November skies;
Too few the tears that day and night are shed
From women's eyes.

Blow o'er them lightly with a soft caress,
Wind of the sea,
If you are tender they may miss love less—
Where e'er they be.

Come, gentle moon, swing low your lantern light
On reddened fields,
And find the lonely harvest of the night
That battle yields.

Banish the darkness filled with quivering dread,
Lest they should know
Some last strange horror—even they—the dead—
Sweet moon, swing low.

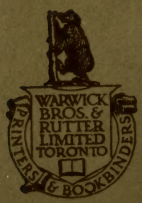
Fold them at dawn, dear earth, within your arms
So safe and strong:
Hold them asleep till they forget alarms,
And woe and wrong.

Master of Kings! If peace be bought with pain
These paid the price;
O show Thy tortured world that not in vain
Is sacrifice!

LAMENT

HERE in my garden where the tulips grow
I walk alone;
Dim are my eyes with tears, my feet are slow
My heart is stone;
Though all the lovely earth again for me
New sweetness yields
It matters not,—only the dead I see
On battlefields.

Only the dead I see,—and strangely bright
Their faces shine
As though the God of Glory in the night
Had made them fine.
Place for the victors! Stoop my soul to touch
Their tunics hem,—
'Tis those they loved who need tears overmuch
O weep for them!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